

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2618  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022**

**LOW INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN RURAL AREAS**

**2618 # SMT. GEETA ALIAS CHANDRAPRABHA:**

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the total coverage of internet connectivity in rural areas of the country at present, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that even today, people in most of the rural areas are deprived of internet services; and
- (c) the steps being taken by Government to increase the internet connectivity coverage?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) & (b) Internet / broadband connectivity is being provided in rural areas by the Licensed Service Providers through wireless mobile and fixed wireline connections. As per data provided by Telecom Service Providers and field units of Department of Telecommunications, it is estimated that out of 5,97,618 inhabited villages (as per Census 2011) in the country, 5,58,537 villages have mobile wireless broadband coverage.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Government for enhancing internet/broadband connectivity coverage in the country:

- (i) National Broadband Mission was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 with a vision to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.
- (ii) In its endeavour to provide high speed internet/broadband connectivity, BharatNet project is envisaged in all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages of the country.
- (iii) To enhance proliferation of internet/broadband services in the country, Prime Minister Wireless Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) framework has been introduced.
- (iv) Various schemes are implemented under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to enhance mobile broadband services in the rural and remote areas of the country including North Eastern Region (NER), areas affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), Border areas, Aspirational Districts and Island Territories.

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